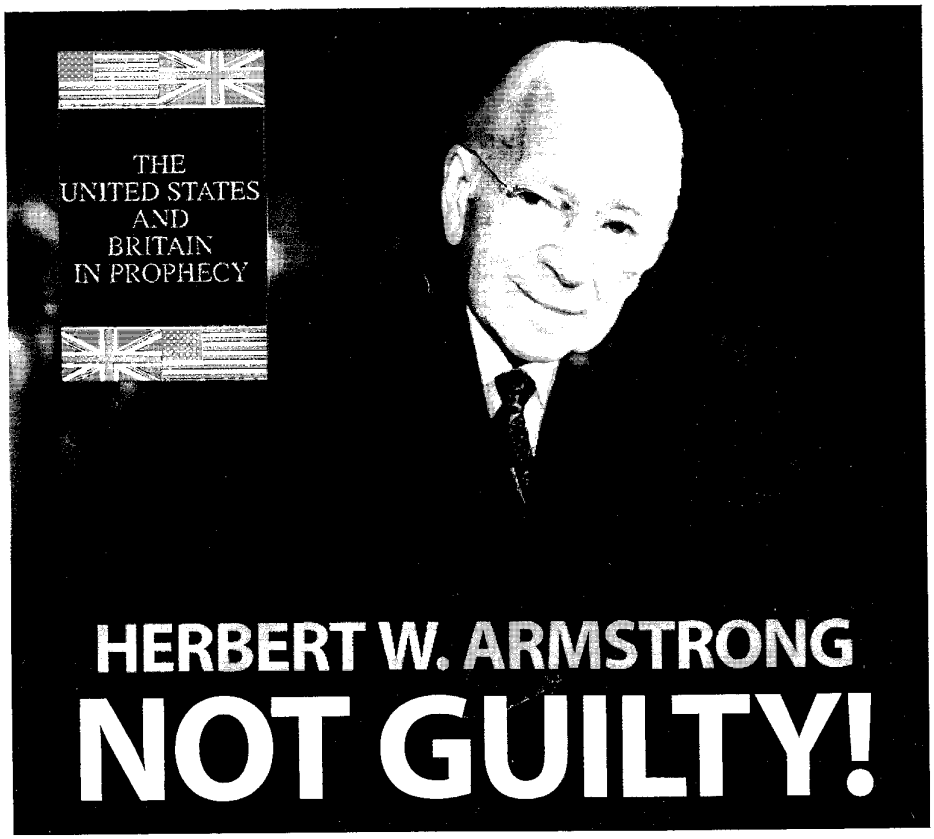

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG NOT GUILTY!

Some have accused Mr. Armstrong of plagiarizing *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*. Careful scrutiny proves these charges false.

By Gary Rethford

THE ACCUSATION AGAINST HERBERT W. Armstrong that he plagiarized the content of *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* from J.H. Allen's book *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright* has arisen numerous times, particularly since Mr. Armstrong's death.

A Worldwide Church of God personal correspondence department letter dated October 2, 1992, stated, "One of the major problems with the old booklet is that much of it is *so similar* to an earlier work, titled *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright* by J.H. Allen, that *some might raise the accusation* of plagiarism" (emphasis mine throughout).

Meanwhile, however, when accusations of plagiarism arose against the WCG concerning one its new booklets, David Hunsberger, from the WCG correspondence department, stated, "*It is not plagiarism, however, to use similar phraseology in defining standard terms and concepts.* Plagiarism involves copying another author's work without attribution or acknowledgment" (July 22, 1993).

Further on in the letter he wrote, "As I recall, this subject arose because I mentioned earlier that one major reason we discontinued Mr. Armstrong's book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* was that it *copied major portions from Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright*, an earlier work by J.H. Allen. If you compare those two texts, you will see it was not a matter of similarities in definitions or concepts. Rather, you will find that many of the chapter headings are identical and *large sections of the text match virtually word for word.*"

So, according to Mr. Hunsberger, plagiarism is the copying of the entirety or major portions of another author's text without giving credit. Using similar phrases to describe standard terms and concepts, however, is not plagiarism. To clarify his statement, if we were writing about the history of Israel and used phrases such as "house of Israel," "children of Israel" or "house of Judah" to describe some of the Israelites, they would be commonly used terms, not plagiarism. Also, according to Mr. Hunsberger, if we were to compare, word for word, the two manuscripts in question—Mr. Armstrong's and Mr. Allen's—we would see that, according to Hunsberger, Mr. Armstrong had copied "large sections" of the text.

A personal correspondence letter of December 8, 1994, stated, "From an ethical point of view, it is well-known by our critics, and we must face the fact, that Mr. Armstrong did not originate this teaching [that the tribes of Israel went to the British Isles]. ... Earlier editions *plagiarized vast portions* of a book entitled *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright.* Here is the bigger problem—it is impossible to say that this was revealed to Mr. Armstrong when, in fact, we can see that he copied it, historical errors included."

Let us take that letter and analyze its several points: First, "it is well-known by our critics, and we must face the fact, that Mr. Armstrong did not originate this teaching." The truth is, Mr. Armstrong never claimed to have been the originator of the teaching. He knew the history, and as already demonstrated, the history of British Israelism goes far back into the past.

Secondly, "Earlier editions plagiarized vast portions of a book entitled *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright. ... [W]e can see that he copied it ...*" Now, that is a lie! They never saw that it was copied, because it wasn't!

Notice an *alleged* proof of copying. The Worldwide Church of God asserts that plagiarism is indicated because both *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* and Allen's book include the statement: "But the great bulk of Israelites are not Jews, just as the great bulk of Americans are not Californians, and yet all Californians are Americans ...." But that accusation has several problems. Remembering that the Worldwide Church of God is pointing to "earlier editions" to prove copying, we checked the copy of the early editions beginning with the original August/September 1940 *Plain Truth* article. The November/December issue of that year contains part two. On page 6 of that issue is this statement: "Jews are Israelites, just as Oregonians are Americans. But MOST Israelites are *not* Jews, just as most Americans are not Oregonians." Both latter editions, *The United States in Prophecy* [1945], and *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* [1945] read the same, using the term "*Oregonians.*" Every subsequent edition contains the same statement.

However, in *The United States and the British Commonwealth in Prophecy*—first published in 1967, then in 1972—it changed. In the 1972 edition, *32 years after the first Plain Truth publication,* we see: "Jews are Israelites, just as Californians are Americans. But most

Israelites are not Jews, just as most Americans are not Californians."

As we can see, the only word changed from the original quotes is the word "Californians." Why was it changed? Did Mr. Armstrong change it, or did someone else? We simply don't know the answers to those questions, *and neither does anyone else.* Does it point to plagiarism by Mr. Armstrong? No! Not only do we not know who made the change, but the fact is, Mr. Armstrong began the work in Oregon and then moved it to California. That would be a natural reason for the change in the text.

Comparing the Texts

In its July 22, 1993, letter, the Worldwide Church of God charged that Mr. Armstrong plagiarized two basic ways: 1) vast amounts of *copied* text, and 2) the same format J.H. Allen used.

A comparison of all editions of *The United States and Britain In Prophecy* by Herbert W. Armstrong with *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright* by J.H. Allen proves otherwise. Using the various editions of *The United States and Britain In Prophecy* editions (original articles of 1940/41, 1945, 1980 and 1986), *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy* (1972 edition) and *The United States In Prophecy* (1945 edition), and comparing them each to the J.H. Allen book (19th edition) several identical tests were executed using the software Wcopyfind 2.2 from the University of Virginia.

The purpose of this software is stated in its instruction page as follows: "WCopyfind 2.1 compares text or word processor documents with one another to determine if they share words in phrases." The program automatically selects all portions of identical text in both books and indicated those places in each manuscript in red and underlined.

The findings were as follows: As to content: Two different tests were run on each edition—several times, adjusting the variables for the most effective settings. In both tests, and in all editions, the greatest portion of "hits" (approximately 99 percent) WERE FROM QUOTED PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE, or references back to those scriptures. These are well marked by Mr. Armstrong as quotes, and are scriptures that would be commonly used by others writing on the same subject—AND WERE! According to Hunsberger's evaluation of what constitutes copying, this would be content commonly used, and therefore could not be called plagiarism! In fact, IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE to write on the subject without using those quoted scriptures! *IF* they noticed that Herbert Armstrong copied large portions of the text, as they say they did, then they had to observe the same fact.

Of the remaining percent, some "hits" are identifying terms, such as "the house of Israel," "the children of Israel," "the house of David," etc. These are biblical phrases commonly used by other scholars, and would also, therefore, be labeled by Hunsberger as acceptable. In addition, writing about the subject would require using those phrases for convenience's sake.

After quotes of Scripture, references to Scripture and commonly used phrases are discounted, the matches that remain fall into the category of incomplete combinations of words. Examples of these combinations are: "or a number of"—"is spoken of"—"name was changed to," etc. Even in this category, there are many repeats counted. The accusation that vast quantities of text were copied is also FALSE!

Common Format

The fact is, when writing on any subject, several choices of outline form are available to any author. Both Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Allen followed the format of Bible chronological order when writing their manuscripts. This is simply the most normal, logical and effective format to use. If two separate authors are writing about the alphabet, and they both begin at the letter A, it is not an indication of plagiarism—it is simply a logical place to begin.

Further, two authors writing on the subject of the Ten Tribes will be forced to proclaim the same facts sooner or later. If two authors write about the red-headed woodpecker, sooner or later they both have to describe a bird with a red head that pecks wood. It doesn't mean one stole from the other, it just means they can't escape the inevitable.

However, the *content* within the outlines of the *The United States and Britain In Prophecy* and J.H. Allen's book do differ from each other. Two examples may be noted: First, while Allen used the heading "Race *Versus* Grace" in part 1, chapter 2, Mr. Armstrong used the heading "Race, *As Well As* Grace." The approach is more than just opposite. It involves a deep understanding of Bible truth by Mr. Armstrong that was not available to J.H. Allen.

Secondly, J.H. Allen wrote the heading "The Sceptre and the Birthright" in part 1, chapter 3, while Mr. Armstrong's emphasis was more on the birthright promises, therefore his heading reverses the order: "The Birthright and the Sceptre." As far as using similar phrases, we should remember that the words *sceptre* and *birthright* are biblical terms, and are, again, commonly used by writers on the subject. Reason asks, how else would you describe the birthright or the scepter? Try it.

The TESTS CONCLUSIVELY DISPROVE the charge that any copying of J.H. Allen occurred. Whether they want to say "whole portions" or partial portions were copied, it just didn't happen! In fact, it is demonstrable, over and over again, that no indication OF ANY KIND exists to show that Herbert W. Armstrong plagiarized any information from J.H. Allen, or anyone else!

But there is one more witness to call to the stand in Mr. Armstrong's defense. That witness is Herbert W. Armstrong, himself.

Herbert Armstrong Takes the Stand

In 1980, Mr. Armstrong conducted a Bible study on Galatians 5 and 6, in Pasadena, California, in which he referred to the accusation of plagiarism. During the first few minutes of the tape, he brought up the subject of a book titled *The Encyclopedia of American Religions.* It was written by J. Gordon Melton, and would have been the first edition. Melton is the director of the Institute for the Study of American Religion (ISAR). Mr. Armstrong strongly disagreed with the content of that book, which dealt with how he had supposedly arrived at the doctrines of the Church.

Here is an excerpt from the Bible study tape of 1980: "I've been looking here in the *Encyclopedia of American Religions,* by J. Gordon Melton, just published in the last year and a half or two years. ...

"It mentions all the little off-shoots that have come out of us. It mentions a lot about us ... and, of course gets it all twisted around—it says that I got all of the truth from the Sardis people except that I borrowed some truth from some other people—but I got it all from people. Now THAT IS A BALD-FACED LIE! I did not get it from people!

"It's true that I had read one or two other writings, and that book of J.H.

Allen on the truth about the lost Ten Tribes, but—in my original conversion, my wife had taken up the Sabbath. To me that was fanaticism. I couldn't talk her out of it. I went into this biblical study—I insisted that the churches couldn't be wrong, that the Bible had to say, Thou shalt observe Sundays, because all the churches observe Sunday, and I said they had to get their religions right out of the Bible.

"Now I began to examine it—I was very shocked and surprised very early in my night-and-day research, and the first intensive part of it lasted six months ... when I discovered that the churches did NOT get what they teach out of the Bible, that they teach exactly the opposite what the Bible says.

"Not only that, I learned that what I had grown up believing was wrong. Now I had also studied evolution, and my head was really swimming for awhile .... I'd always supposed God exists, I'd always heard He does—I'd been taught it as a boy, I'd been raised up in church and Sunday school, so I just took it for granted, but I said I HAD NEVER PROVED IT! I have never see PROOF that there is a God, and that God exists. Now, I won't accept it unless I can prove it.

"So I went into that first. I just sidetracked my wife's contention about keeping the Sabbath [at] the time being—I had to prove that God exists first. I did prove it, and I completely disproved evolution. Now I've since proved it to others too, but it didn't make any difference whether I proved it to others or not, I had to convince myself. I had convinced atheists since, that God does exist, and forced them to admit it ....

"I found that other churches had got their religion from other men, and I said I will NOT get it from other men, I will not believe what other people say .... I will believe only what I find God says.

"Next, I had to prove—is the Bible the Word of God? AND I PROVED TO MY TOTAL AND COMPLETE SATISFACTION THAT THE BIBLE—IN ITS ORIGINAL WRITINGS IS THE EXACT, PRECISE WORD OF THE LIVING GOD. ... I did examine their beliefs—some of them. I examined this so-called Anglo-Israel theory ... but I checked it very carefully with the Bible, and I only believed what I saw in the Bible, and I didn't believe and even threw out a lot of what they had.

"Now in this [encyclopedia], I am recorded as the leading exponent of that theory today, and yet it (the theory) goes back about 200 years. And the whole thing, they say, is anti-Jewish, it is anti-Semitic and it is racial. NOW I HAVE NEVER HAD ANYTHING LIKE THAT IN MY MIND FROM THE BEGINNING, or up to now. But [Melton] ASSUMES, because SOME OF THEM did have that idea—and I think that some in England did ....

"But that just shows you when men write things, they never get it straight ... and I'm supposed to have gotten most of what I believe from the Sardis people, and I got this from the Anglo-Israel people, and I got something else from some other people, but they can't understand that you could get truth from anybody but people—because he got everything he believes from people. Most people do. I don't know any religious leader on the face of the Earth who received what he knows except he got it from other people. Do you? Tell me, if you do—who is it?"

Those who have heard Herbert W. Armstrong will recognize the tone of that transcript. It also answers the question of why no one accused him of plagiarism to his face!

The proof is abundant. HERBERT ARMSTRONG IS NOT GUILTY! The truth is, when he wrote the *The United States and Britain In Prophecy,* he did it in a unique and very effective way. He began with a study of the Scriptures. Next, he also studied the written histories to fill in the supporting information. The written historical evidence is considerable, reaching back to 1320 A.D. and beyond.

Having done that, he arrived at the only possible conclusion from the historical and biblical evidence—namely that the British Commonwealth and American peoples are the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, and inheritors of the birthright promises. More than that, while it is true that other individuals wrote about the connection between the Anglo-Saxon peoples and the House of Israel, the other writers placed their emphasis on Israel's identity.

Mr. Armstrong, however, placed the emphasis where it belongs—first on the great God and His plan, THEN on the identity of Israel. *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* is not a racist teaching, even though hate groups love to read that into the message. The truth is, God is going to bless the whole world *through* Ephraim and Manasseh! That is not a message of hate—it is A MESSAGE OF LOVE, AND HOPE, FOR THE FUTURE OF ALL MANKIND! Civilization is not going to end in a gigantic fireball—HUMANITY WILL BE SAVED FROM ITSELF! That's what Mr. Armstrong taught! No other man taught that to this modern world. It is the message of the soon-coming Kingdom of God.

Because he was led and used by God as a watchman to this world, Herbert Armstrong was able to explain and expound the deeper truths contained in that knowledge, and condense it all into a concise book that is easily understandable and can be read by the average person, without losing its impact. If a child can read even fairly well, he can read and understand *The United States and Britain in Prophecy.*

In addition, there can be no doubt that Mr. Armstrong was instrumental in placing the truth about the United States and Britain in prophecy into the hands of more readers than ALL other writers on the subject combined—ever. His detractors freely acknowledge this fact. And he made sure it went to all who requested the booklet—free of charge! FIVE MILLION COPIES! Of all who wrote on the subject, Mr. Armstrong alone focused attention on the Creator God, and His prophesied plan to bless all nations through Israel—Great Britain and America.

The diabolical attempt to block the printing of *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* has failed. Thanks to the great God who controls all things—the real author and owner of this truth—*The United States and Britain in Prophecy* is being produced and distributed once again. God has given the victory to His Church, and under the direction of Jesus Christ, through Gerald Flurry, it is now going out to the largest audience possible. ❖

CORRECTION

The article "God Confronts Sin" in the September/October issue erroneously stated that the "great multitude" of Revelation 7:9 would include people who repent during the Day of the Lord. In fact, the great multitude will *come out* of the Great Tribulation (v. 14) and not be subjected to the Day of the Lord. Gerald Flurry has speculated that they may actually be protected in or near the place of safety, where God's people will be, during the Day of the Lord. Like those who repent during the Day of the Lord, this innumerable group will live over as physical beings into the Kingdom of God, the first generation to be taught God's ways and rebuild the Earth.